



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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September 29, 1989

89-141

Baptist Men serve 150,000 meals
in first week of Hugo ministry

By Joe Westbury

N-HMB

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--Members of the Baptist Men organization served 150,000 meals in the first week following Hurricane Hugo and are nearing service capacity for the 13 feeding units.

George Bullard, director of the missions division for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, said the disaster response units are serving 35,000 hot meals a day and will reach capacity as they near 40,000 meals.

Bullard, whose division supervises Southern Baptist Brotherhood work in the state, said National Guard and other emergency personnel continue to locate individuals in isolated areas who need food and other supplies.

"We thought the needs would start to subside by now but they haven't," Bullard said a week after Hugo ravaged his state. "They're actually starting to grow as we discover additional pockets of people who have been near starving when they were found."

The National Guard located people Sept. 28 in the rural areas near Macedonia, 40 miles north of Charleston, who had been stranded by the storm and had no food supplies.

"An elderly couple was found trapped inside their mobile home by fallen trees, and another woman had been pinned in her bathtub for six days because of fallen timber. Another woman was found Wednesday, five days after the storm, who had survived on half a loaf of bread," he said.

About 20,000 of each day's 35,000 meals are being provided to "the forgotten rural areas away from Charleston," Bullard said. "Some of these areas were hit worse than the city but have been neglected by the media."

A few of the feeding units are expected to remain for as long as three weeks, but the majority will begin returning to their states earlier, he added.

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Hugo brings stories of
heroes, heartache in S.C.

By Mark Wingfield

F-HMB

Baptist Press
9/29/89

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--Stories of heroes and heartache surfaced all along the South Carolina coast as the waters of Hurricane Hugo subsided.

Southern Baptists were among the heroes because of a quick response by members of the Baptist Men organization from 11 states who began arriving the day after the hurricane hit to serve hot meals and to clear debris.

But the people they met usually bore the heartache. They came to the disaster relief centers on foot, riding bicycles, driving yellow taxis and silver Mercedes. And almost every one had a story to tell.

Charlie Dutart was trapped on the roof of a school building for four hours during the storm. He and two other men climbed through a broken window in search of higher ground during the height of the storm in McClellanville, a small shrimping town 30 miles north of Charleston.

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Once on the roof, the three were trapped by high winds and rising waters. The several hundred people remaining in the school cafeteria stood on chairs and held babies high in their arms to keep their heads above five feet of water.

McClellanville was among the areas hit hardest by Hugo. A 17-foot surge of water flooded most homes with muddy silt, causing a fishy stench to linger over the town for days. One woman returned to find her clothes closet filled with fish.

Shrimp boats washed ashore and crashed together, some landing in yards and on top of houses. Fallen trees lay twisted together with electric lines in every yard.

A disaster relief unit from the Florida Baptist Convention arrived in McClellanville about 48 hours after the storm, long before media attention turned from Charleston to the less populated areas.

The crew of nine volunteers stood in ankle-deep mud to serve 1,020 hot meals the next day. Like the hurricane's victims, they had no toilets, no showers, no beds. They worked 15-hour days, went four days without bathing and slept in their cars.

In the following days, the Florida crew served more than 2,000 meals per day, including nearly 1,000 per day sent out with mobile Red Cross feeding units.

Yet the difficult conditions the volunteers faced paled in comparison to the plight of the victims. "We slept in our car the first night and I thought about these poor people," recalled volunteer Beverly Bagnal. "Their mattresses had mud all over them."

Mrs. Bagnal and her husband, Bill, were among seven volunteers from Florida's Palm Lake Baptist Association who came to McClellanville to work. Ironically, early weather reports had said the hurricane could hit their home, West Palm Beach, rather than the South Carolina coast.

"We thought they might be coming to help us," Bagnal said. "But now the least we can do is help them."

While the impact of both the devastation and the relief efforts was impressive in isolated cases, it became overwhelming when seen on a large scale, observers agreed.

The devastation stretched 100 miles along the South Carolina coast, from Charleston to north of Myrtle Beach. An entire national forest was left in shambles, with 75-foot trees uniformly snapped off in the middle. One relief worker said the scene looked as if giant had walked through the forest with hedge clippers and snipped every tree in half.

But Southern Baptist relief efforts were almost as widespread as the devastation. Thirteen disaster relief units were set up in different communities -- in poor inner-city neighborhoods of Charleston, in rural inland towns and in northern beachfront resorts.

In the first week after the storm hit, these units served 150,000 meals to the homeless, without electricity or without water.

Additional volunteer teams, mainly from Baptist associations in other parts of South Carolina, arrived with chain saws to clear debris from churches and homes.

The Southern Baptist volunteers met heroes and heartache in a variety of forms:

-- In McClellanville, a woman who came to the disaster relief unit for food had driven throughout the community looking for elderly and disabled people who could not get out for food. She distributed meals to 16 people.

-- In Charleston, the Alabama Baptist Convention's disaster relief unit provided 150 hot meals to residents of a nursing home who had been stranded by the storm and hadn't eaten in several days.

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-- Bruce Russell, pastor at Charleston Heights Baptist Church in North Charleston, recalled the devastation his own church members faced. "We went to take food to one church family, and when we got there they were cleaning out their freezer, throwing out everything they had," he said with tears welling up in his eyes. "It just broke my heart."

-- One of the oldest members of Charleston Heights Church weathered the hurricane in a shelter. After the storm, he was taken to see the damage to his home. On the way back to the shelter, he had a heart attack and died.

-- One young woman who came to Citadel Square Baptist Church for assistance had just lost her husband in a random shooting the week before the hurricane ruined her home. She and her six-month-old baby had no food until they came to the church, where they received food, diapers and other baby supplies.

-- A middle-class couple with two teen-agers had just been transferred to Charleston before the storm hit. His office was to be closed for the next 10 days, and he had only \$6 left. Like other hurricane victims, he could not get to checking or savings accounts because banks were closed and electricity was off. Despite their own need, the man and his wife arrived at the Alabama relief unit to volunteer their services.

-- Two women from Florida also showed up unexpectedly at the Alabama feeding unit as volunteers. Upon hearing news of the hurricane's damage, they felt impressed by God to help and loaded their children in the car and drove right to Citadel Square Church, not knowing a feeding station would be there or how to get there.

-- Pastor Jerry Cook of First Baptist Church of Murrells Inlet took a mobile feeding unit from the Missouri Baptist Convention through neighborhoods around his church. A volunteer worker drove the truck while Cook stood at an open serving window calling to people cleaning up debris from their yards. As he served them a hot lunch, the pastor introduced himself and issued an invitation to attend church.

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FBC, Charleston cuts services,
expands ministry following disaster

By Oscar Hoffmeyer

N- (CO)
(La.)

Baptist Press
9/29/89

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)--The congregation of historic First Baptist Church of Charleston, S.C., hopes to return to its storm-damaged sanctuary in about three weeks if repairs are adequate to allow services to be held.

Until then, the congregation plans to worship in the church gymnasium.

The 167-year-old structure, the oldest Baptist church in the South, is the mother church of the Southern Baptist Convention. The congregation has met on its current site since 1699 in what is now the Charleston Historic District.

The sanctuary was heavily damaged Sept. 22 when winds from Hurricane Hugo ripped the tin roofing from the structure. Rain then poured into the exposed rafters and soaked the sanctuary below.

"The water poured through the holes and may have weakened the plaster," said Scott Walker, pastor of the 290-year-old congregation. "We will return to using the building as soon as the safety inspector gives us clearance."

But falling water-soaked plaster may cause a longer delay, Walker said as he walked among the debris. Large humidifiers costing \$20,000 a week have been brought in to slowly dry the building, but the extent of the damage has not been determined.

The elaborate pew stalls and other woodwork in the sanctuary are swollen with moisture, and rainwater stands in the pipes of the large organ. Church members arrived the Sunday after the storm to pull up the ruined carpet.

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The street outside the sanctuary now is littered with beams from the church's original roofing. The timbers, nearly 200 years old, are studded with handmade nails that craftsmen fashioned to build the sanctuary.

The congregation has voted to cancel Sunday school and the second worship service for Oct. 1, with only one service being held at 9 a.m. The extra time "will give members an opportunity to have fellowship at the church and share their feelings about the disaster," the pastor said.

The sanctuary, which seats about 650 people, has had two services for several years.

The congregation expects to resume the normal schedule Oct. 8, using the gym for worship services.

"Even if we return to the sanctuary by Oct. 22, a lot of work will remain to restore the building," Walker said. "We will be uncomfortable, but we will be home."

In the midst of its own problems, the congregation has managed to reach out to the storm-ravaged community with two new ministry programs.

A new disaster relief fund will benefit any needy individuals, whether or not they are members of the church. The second fund will be used to help repair and restore the building as close as possible to its original condition.

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Sunday School Board offers help
to churches impacted by Hugo

N-SSB

Baptist Press
9/29/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Replacement literature and discount prices for signs, steeples, furniture, audiovisual equipment and other items for Southern Baptist churches damaged by Hurricane Hugo which ravaged Charleston, S.C., and surrounding areas Sept. 22 is being offered by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Also, a three-member team from the board's church architecture department will travel to Charleston in October to assist church leaders in making plans for repairs or rebuilding. An architect and two consultants are expected to spend several days assisting churches as part of an effort being coordinated by the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

With a new quarter beginning Oct. 1, new dated periodical literature probably already was on hand in most churches and may have been destroyed in the hurricane, said Sunday School Board President Lloyd Elder.

As long as supplies last, the board will replace dated literature, Elder said. Where inventory is limited, churches will be provided sample copies of pupil and leadership materials and one-time permission granted for them to make copies.

Also, the board will provide 25 free "Baptist Hymnals" to any church whose hymnals were destroyed in the hurricane, he added. Additional hymnals will be sold at \$3.15 each, including postage, a \$2 discount. And discounts will be offered on the "Broadman" and "Christian Praise" hymnals, as well as Christmas cantatas.

Elder said churches may request the literature or hymnals by calling the board's toll-free customer service number, (800) 458-BSSB. Hymnals and cantatas also may be obtained at Baptist Book Stores in Columbia, S.C., or Savannah, Ga.

Audiovisual equipment, signs, furniture, steeples and baptistries may be ordered by calling Broadman Press at (615) 251-2544.

"Making these resources available to these churches coping with so many difficulties is one small way to help as people clean up from the damage and make a new beginning," said Elder. "We join Southern Baptists everywhere in praying that God's strength will be more than sufficient for our brothers and sisters as they rebuild lives and homes and churches."

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Hurricane Hugo destroys
churches in Virgin Isles

By Jim Newton

N-HMB

CHRISTIANSTED, St. Croix (BP)--Like the pirates who haunted the Caribbean centuries ago, Hurricane Hugo raped and pillaged the Virgin Islands, demolishing all four of the Southern Baptist churches on St. Croix and St. Thomas.

Officials estimated that 80 percent of the buildings on the island of St. Croix were destroyed or severely damaged.

In the wake of the hurricane, Southern Baptists were slow to respond to the needs, hampered by poor communications and transportation between the islands and the mainland.

Grace Central Baptist Church on St. Croix, the largest Baptist church in the U.S. Virgin Islands, was gutted by winds of up to 200 miles per hour. Most of the church's roof was blown away, and the concrete walls exploded, dumping tons of water on the concrete floor.

Grace Golden Rock Baptist Church, located in the Harbor View section of St. Croix just north of Christiansted, was the hardest-hit church. Only the concrete-block walls were standing. The roof disappeared completely, flooding and destroying the furnishings inside.

American Red Cross officials estimated electrical power and telephone service might not be restored on St. Croix for three or four months. They predicted long-range problems of providing food, housing and medical care for the island's 60,000 residents.

Representatives of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission issued an appeal for Baptist volunteers to build and operate mobile food kitchens on St. Croix and for nurses to help provide health-care services in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Construction teams also are needed to help rebuild churches and homes of hurricane victims who lost everything.

"This is not the same island that I know and love," lamented Mark Sly, volunteer director for the Puerto Rico Baptist Association, when he visited St. Croix a week after Hugo hit.

"This is my favorite island," said Sly with tears in his eyes as he surveyed the once-verdant land where dense vegetation and trees were stripped bare by the winds that swept the island like a gigantic lawn mower.

Ed Richardson, executive secretary of the Puerto Rico Baptist Association, estimated total damage to Baptist churches on Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands at more than \$750,000, including \$300,000 damage on St. Croix and \$200,000 on St. Thomas.

About 10 churches on the islands of Puerto Rico and Vieques sustained damage totalling \$250,000. Puerto Rican Baptist Seminary, located in the center of Puerto Rico protected by a mountain range, was spared with only minor damage of about \$20,000, said to Seminary Director Miguel Soto.

Ceiba Baptist Church on the eastern tip of Puerto Rico was flooded following major roof damage that will cost \$100,000 to repair, said Richardson, who was pastor of the Ceiba church before becoming the association's executive secretary.

Hugo spared most of the city of San Juan but devastated the east coast city of Fajardo near the U.S. Navy base at Roosevelt Roads.

Riding out the hurricane in the Fajardo church "was one of the most horrible experiences of my life," said Renaldo Velez, pastor of Canaan Baptist Church in Fajardo and pastor of Saron Baptist Church on the island of Vieques. "The winds sounded like a 747 jet taking off above the church."

Velez watched the darkened skies while galvanized steel roof panels fluttered in the air like butterflies. The steel roof covering the church's Sunday school classroom was ripped off and blown away without a trace.

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Even though his Fajardo church building was severely damaged, Velez used the building as a distribution center for food and clothing for hurricane victims at both Fajardo and the island of Vieques. He spent more than \$300 of his own money on medicine badly needed by people on Vieques, an island with no medical facilities about eight miles from Puerto Rico.

Velez, who accepted Christ at a Spanish Baptist mission sponsored by First Baptist Church of Killeen, Texas, while stationed at Fort Hood, is one of the few Puerto Rican pastors who serves more than one church.

Victor Morales, pastor of Amor Baptist Church of Ceiba, Puerto Rico, also established a clothing and food distribution center at his badly damaged church. Morales cited a crying need for baby food, baby formula and bottles, disposable diapers and medicine.

Lack of water and electricity made cooking difficult, even when food was available. Frozen foods, especially meat, soon spoiled when refrigerators sat for days in 80-degree heat without electricity. Chain saws and generators were sold for double and triple usual prices.

Crushed ice, which normally costs 60 cents a bag, reportedly was scalped in some places for \$15 until the government froze the price at \$2. On the highway between San Juan and Fajardo, at least 300 people stood in line for four hours to buy ice.

Puerto Ricans who lost almost everything shared the little they had with others less fortunate. Unlike looters on St. Croix, Puerto Ricans pitched in and helped each other.

Sly, the on-site coordinator for Baptist relief efforts in Puerto Rico, said six families in his neighborhood pooled resources. One family cooked food on a butane camping stove. Another provided water from a swimming pool for washing and clean-up. Another hooked five refrigerators to one gasoline generator.

When his neighbor offered to run an extension chord from the generator to Fly's refrigerator, Fly declined. "I have faith the electricity will be restored soon." A few minutes later, the power came on, prompting his neighbor to exclaim, "I believe, I believe."

Puerto Rico's tropical rain forest, a major tourist attraction, was stripped bare of leaves. The brown mountainside resembled a cemetery of wooden skeletons, with uprooted trees twisted and broken like match sticks. Officials estimated the forest will take decades to grow back.

But the indescribable devastation hurt people more than buildings or trees. "The crying of little babies who have not eaten for days will ring in my ears for years," said a Red Cross volunteer in San Juan.

Gil Guevara, Red Cross director on St. Croix, noted a tremendous need for Baptists to set up mobile kitchens to feed hungry people on the island.

While Baptists responded quickly to needs in Charleston, S.C., Baptist help came slowly in the Caribbean, where days passed before telephone and airline service was re-established.

Richardson, for example, was stranded on the island of Antigua when the hurricane hit and was not able to telephone Puerto Rico or fly home until eight days later.

Sly said the greatest need now is for portable generators, potable water, food, medicine and volunteers to help in the long-term reconstruction process. "Rebuilding will take a long time, but we are committed to doing all we can to help," he said.

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Volunteers needed to feed
hungry, rebuild churches

N-HMB

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (BP)--Volunteers are needed urgently to operate mobile kitchens on the island of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, and to rebuild churches and homes destroyed by Hurricane Hugo, officials there said.

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Following a tour of the islands to assess damage and determine how Baptists should respond, an appeal for volunteers was issued by Ed Richardson, executive secretary of the Puerto Rico Baptist Association; Paul Adkins, vice president for ministry at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board; and Bill Arnold, a disaster relief consultant from Texas representing the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

At least four temporary field kitchens are needed on St. Croix to feed thousands of homeless people without facilities to cook their own meals, said Arnold after a visit with American Red Cross officials.

Volunteers who come to St. Croix will have to live in tents, sleep on cots and cook food provided by the Red Cross, since almost all lodging was destroyed by the hurricane.

Adkins and Arnold, missions coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, also issued an appeal for at least 50 nurses to work with the Red Cross in Puerto Rico, providing medical care for hurricane victims. The Red Cross will provide food and lodging for nurses who can come at their own expense to Puerto Rico, they said.

Construction teams also are needed to rebuild and repair churches and homes damaged or destroyed by Hugo. Construction teams on Puerto Rico will be housed at the Baptist encampment, which escaped major damage, but workers on St. Croix will have to stay in tents.

Adkins delivered to Puerto Rican Baptists a check for \$12,000 for emergency disaster recovery needs and approved a request for \$25,000 from Home Mission Board domestic hunger funds to relieve suffering in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Home Mission Board administers a \$100,000 disaster relief fund and distributes designated contributions for hunger relief provided by Southern Baptists.

Baptists interested in volunteering in the hurricane relief effort should contact the SBC Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., by calling (800) 727-6466. Financial contributions for disaster relief and domestic hunger should be designated for that purpose and sent to the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367.

The Home Mission Board is responsible for missions work in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Island Islands and for administering disaster relief funds contributed by Southern Baptists in the United States and its territories.

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Southwestern trustees ask
executive session on Dilday

By Dan Martin

N-10

Baptist Press
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary will be asked to go into executive session Oct. 17 to discuss the "whole problem of political activity" by President Russell Dilday.

The request for an executive session was introduced in an 85-page memorandum mailed to trustees in late September by Chairman Ken Lilly, a physician from Fort Smith, Ark.

Lilly told Baptist Press "a number of the trustees are going to ask" for the closed-door meeting. "They, themselves, will decide whether they want an executive session," he added.

Lilly said he "really wanted a special meeting because this is not the kind of thing which should be discussed in an annual or semi-annual meeting."

Dilday met with the three trustees officers -- Lilly, Damon Shook, a pastor from Houston, and John McNaughton, a businessman from Fort Worth, Texas -- in mid-August to discuss the possibility of a special called meeting to discuss Dilday's "political activities," particularly a May 2 speech before a moderate political group and an article he wrote prior to the 1989 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Lilly said "some of the guys (trustees) wrote me letters" complaining about Dilday's appearance at a rally of Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention May 2 in Nashville, which brought about the mid-August meeting.

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"I tried to be as nice about it as I can," Lilly said. "I went to Russell (Dilday) to try to solve some of the problems. I think they could be a lot less if they were handled in a quiet way rather than in the press, but Russell's attitude is that if you get it all in the press, it will make a big difference.

"Well, it's not going to change anything; the guys still want to talk to him about all of this."

All participants in the Aug. 15 meeting agreed not to talk to the news media about the meeting. In his memo, Lilly wrote: "You will note the usual acitivity of the president to 'try the case' in the liberal media even before we have time to act on it. This seems to happen every time we try to solve problems quietly."

Lilly added he has "no malice in my heart, no axe to grind. I want to believe we can meet with the president (Dilday) and come to an understanding. I want for the trustees and the president to meet together."

Lilly's memo to trustees, he said, is a reaction to a mailing Dilday sent out which included a manuscript of the May 2 speech on denominational unity and the May president's column in Southwestern News, the seminary's newsletter.

In the memo, Lilly thanked Dilday for "sending us part of the information we may need. ... I am sending you more information which may be helpful."

The memo includes minutes from the Aug. 15 meeting; a copy of the statement issued to the media about the meeting; both the manuscript and a transcript of the May 2 speech; nine pages of quotes from Dilday, ranging to 1984 and citing 55 entries from newspapers, magazines and newsletters; 56 photocopied news articles; and programs of the Baptists Committed meeting.

The cover letter notes trustees "will want to hear his (Dilday's) fascinating explanation as to how his political speech was not political."

Dilday said he opposes the call for an executive session. "When I came 11 years ago, all of the meetings of the trustees were closed. I insisted they be open to anyone wanting to attend, and an executive session should only be called in matters where it might embarrass the person about whom we were talking," he said.

"Executive sessions should never be a way of avoiding public awareness of what the board was doing or to keep the press, faculty, staff or interested constituents from being informed about what is happening.

"I would not be embarrassed if this (political activity) is discussed. I hope the board will not vote to make it a closed session, because I think Baptists have every right to be fully informed about the work of their institutions."

Neither Dilday nor Lilly would speculate about what the trustees will do.

"I don't even want to speculate on that," Lilly said. "I do know that trustees are going to insist on discussing with him what they feel are political activities on his part."

Dilday added: "I trust the integrity and genuineness of these board members. I cannot believe they will come in with their minds made up or with a view of taking any strong action.

"I am a staunch conservative, and the only things I have spoken out against -- even as I reflect on this (Lilly's mailing) -- is that which was destructive, divisive, un-Christlike, contrary to the gospel and contrary to our Southern Baptist heritage."

He added he did not receive a copy of the memo from Lilly but received it "indirectly from one of the board members. I am sure that was an oversight."

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Dilday also noted he has been "reluctant to initiate any news or press on this, but I have always been open to answer questions and respond. After the meeting with the officers, we agreed we had no reason to share information with the press, but I had to respond because there was a lot of disinformation."

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Pressler nomination
status is unchanged

N-CO

Baptist Press
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HOUSTON (BP)--The status of the possible nomination of Paul Pressler to head the federal Office of Government Ethics is unchanged, despite conflicting reports about the possible nomination by President Bush.

Reports have circulated the nomination has been dropped, but they have been countered by other rumors he still is in the running for the federal post.

Pressler told Baptist Press Sept. 29: "The status (of the nomination) is that I have not been offered the job, and I have not decided to accept it if it is offered."

"The status has not changed but has become a little muddier with the reported leaks."

In late July, newspapers reported Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge and vice chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, was being considered for the top government ethics post.

Other reports began to surface about a month later, saying Pressler was too controversial for the job because of the role he has played in the conservative resurgence in the SBC. The reports have been countered by White House comments that he still is being considered.

The FBI talked to a number of Southern Baptists, and reports were made concerning the controversial judge. However, the FBI declined to disclose the contents of its findings.

"The only way we will release information, outside of press releases on major stories, is when the subject is deceased or a privacy waiver has been obtained," said Chris Glenn of the FBI's freedom of information office.

Pressler told Baptist Press, "I have been disappointed with the obvious ugliness of those in the convention who have been engaged in rumor and innuendo."

Presidential personnel director Chase Undermeyer did not return calls from Baptist Press when the SBC news service called seeking a conclusive report on Pressler's status.

Likewise, the White House press secretary's office declined comment, referring calls to the office of the executive clerk of the White House. The clerk's staff members said no paperwork had been filed regarding the nomination of Pressler.

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Baptist teachers, students
return to China posts

By Michael Chute

A FMB

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HONG KONG (BP)--Southern Baptist teachers and students have returned to China after leaving the nation following the June 4 military crackdown on student protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

The teachers, sponsored by the Southern Baptist aid organization Cooperative Services International, joined most other foreigners in leaving China after the crackdown. Chinese students at most universities boycotted classes, closing out the spring semester a month early. Cooperative Services International also canceled its summer language institutes.

The 52 CSI teachers and students in this fall's group comprise the largest number assigned to China by the Southern Baptist organization in its four-year existence. The 46 teachers in the group top by nearly one-third last year's total of 35. The six students double last year's figure.

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Figures quoted in China's official People's Daily newspaper indicated CSI teachers make up nearly one-fourth of the 205 English-language teachers from the United States and Canada working in Chinese colleges and universities this fall.

CSI increased the number of its China personnel as other sending organizations reduced their commitments to China. CSI accepted Chinese educators' requests to fill slots vacated by some other organizations, although CSI officials insisted they are not trying to undercut the work of other groups.

CSI personnel are scattered throughout 21 colleges and universities in 10 Chinese provinces. But officials decided not to assign personnel to remote regions of the country because the political situation in China still is tense.

"Our experience seems to be unique even among Christian organizations," said Jack Shelby, CSI's Hong Kong-based administrator. "There seems to be a drop-off in the number of people wanting to go to China this year."

Four teachers who initially requested CSI sponsorship dropped out of the program May 31, five days before the Tiananmen Square incident. These were the only cancellations reported by the organization, and all were unrelated to events in China. One-third of the current group of teachers taught in China last year, as all teachers eligible for another year returned.

However, the Chinese government canceled the United States' Fulbright scholar exchange program in retaliation for the U.S. government's support of the Chinese pro-democracy movement. Fulbright scholars slated for China are studying in other Asian nations. The British university system also decided not to send students or teachers to China.

Some organizations have curtailed their China involvement as a protest against the Chinese government's activities during the student-led demonstrations. Others have experienced cancellations or had difficulty securing applicants after the Tiananmen Square incident.

"Some people feel our presence (in China) may be used for propaganda purposes," said Shelby. "We don't want that to happen, but if it happens, that's the trade-off. Our enhanced relationship with the Chinese people outweighs any propaganda gains or considerations."

CSI administrators huddled during the summer in Hong Kong to discuss future efforts in China and what their response to the military crackdown would be. They concluded that "we are in China as guests of the Chinese government and the Chinese people. CSI is there to help and to serve as friends of the Chinese people," Shelby related.

"It is not appropriate for us to protest anything, or to sit in judgment upon the government or people, or to punish them. If we withdrew our people or curtailed our involvement now, it would first of all be inappropriate to our role in China. Secondly, the people hurt would be the very ones we're there to help, namely the students."

CSI officials expressed guarded optimism concerning work in China, encouraged by the increased number of teaching slots opened to their teachers.

"We are going back under our original motivation: through our presence there, to serve Christ among the Chinese people," said Charlie Wilson, CSI educational resource coordinator for China.

"Right now we're very thankful to just be there. At the beginning of the summer, even our presence was in question."

Even at the end of August, prospects for a return to China looked bleak. Administrators at many Chinese universities postponed beginning dates for classes several times. Invitations to foreign teachers from Chinese officials lagged behind schedule. CSI leaders worried that teachers would not have enough time to secure visas once the invitations came.

"There were many loose ends about assignments," Wilson admitted. "We had the people, but we didn't have the invitations. At the last minute, we had to change some assignments" as invitations came in.

Both CSI and Chinese officials are concerned about the reaction Chinese students and teachers might have now toward foreign teachers.

"Chinese educators are anxious to do education," said Wilson. "We want to help them do education. What they're unsure of, and what we're unsure of, is the extent to which a political education campaign might affect our academic work.

"They're concerned that any policy changes that might come down from Beijing -- which would be more conservative, meaning less open to reform and change -- might negatively affect the relationship between foreign teachers and Chinese students and teachers."

Outwardly, the situation in China appears calm. However, sources said an undercurrent of discontent remains. The government has placed some of the blame on Chinese educators for the student unrest.

A front-page editorial in the Guangming Daily accused Chinese teachers of using classrooms to advocate "bourgeois liberalization," the term used for Western ideas and concepts. The People's Daily said "elitism" and "lack of realism" were the reasons students from 600 Chinese universities were involved in the pro-democracy movement. The newspaper blamed the Tiananmen Square demonstrations on students' ideological shortcomings.

In addition to regular classes, students are being exposed to an increased emphasis on communist ideology. Other reports say some first-year students must complete military assignments before beginning their studies. Also, some upper-class students have been relocated to rural universities.

Among measures taken to avert renewed campus unrest, Prime Minister Li Peng revealed that most of the 35,000 recent graduates are required to work on farms or in factories for a year or two before enrolling in graduate school or taking jobs in government or industry.

The Shanghai Education Department stated students cannot attend illegal gatherings, marches or demonstrations, and cannot publish journals or form associations without school approval.

CSI's Hong Kong office has heard from all CSI personnel now in China, and has "not detected any significant differences in the settling in of this year's group and last year's group," Shelby said. "They've all been received very cordially by the Chinese." CSI teachers in Beijing, along with other foreign teachers, were invited to a banquet at the Great Hall of the People commemorating National Day Oct. 1, he added.

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Baptists minister in wake
of south Texas bus tragedy

By Ken Camp

F - Texas

Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP)--In the days following a south Texas school bus accident that claimed the lives of 20 children, local Texas Baptist pastors joined hands with other Christians in comforting grieving families and counseling a shattered community.

Three children associated with Iglesia Bautista Del Pueblo, or Baptist Church of the People, in Mission were on board the bus which collided with a truck and tumbled into a water-filled gravel pit near Alton Sept. 21. The wreck was said to be the worst school bus accident in Texas history.

Ysenia Perez, 16, died Sept. 22 of injuries sustained the day before. Juan and Jesus Cuellar were injured.

About 300 people attended a community wide memorial service at Del Pueblo Sept. 21, said Pastor Juan de la Garza. The service was the first of several held in the poor, predominantly Hispanic community.

Immediately after the tragedy, pastors throughout the lower Rio Grande Valley, including Ed Gilpin of First Baptist Church of Mission, were called to counsel family members at local hospitals and the temporary morgue.

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Area church members prepared meals for grieving families and provided child care for children whose parents were at the hospital or who were making funeral arrangements.

Thirty-five pastors of churches in Mission and neighboring communities met to plan a community response to the tragedy. Working with civic leaders and the local school district, the ministerial alliance planned an interdenominational community service at the Tom Landry Stadium in Mission.

"Of course, all weekend extra-curricular activities were cancelled, including the scheduled Friday night football game," said Gilpin. "More than 12,000 people attended the memorial service."

Richard Shahan, pastor of Conway Avenue Baptist Church in Mission, was among about 20 ministers who helped to lead the service. Since his church has been involved in leading Vacation Bible Schools and Backyard Bible Clubs in Alton, laying the groundwork for a Baptist mission in the tiny community, Shahan had a personal interest in the children.

"The rural route where the children on the bus came from was within a half-mile of the site where we had Vacation Bible School," he said. "Unfortunately, we haven't been able to do much follow-up since the summer, so we have no way of knowing how many of the kids on the bus may have attended our Bible school."

Like other pastors in the lower Rio Grande Valley, Shahan had been enlisted by the local school district to counsel families who had been devastated by the bus wreck. His wife, who has been working at the Alton school as substitute for a teacher on maternity leave, said many students still are numbed with shock at the loss of friends and siblings.

"Somebody described it as a dull, sad calm hanging over the school," Shahan said. "It's been very quiet there compared to normal."

Gilpin, whose wife is assistant principal at Alton Junior High School, has counseled with a number of the troubled students. Most, he said, just want to know, "Why?"

"I told them that God does not give us the answers to 'why' questions. Deuteronomy 29:29 says that 'the secret things belong to God, but the revealed things belong to us,'" said Gilpin.

"I tried to tell them, 'We can trust your friend into the hands of a loving, just and fair God.' I tried to portray for them what it means to be accepted into the presence of the Lord Jesus."

He stressed the themes of resurrection and reunion, assuring the children that they would see their friends again someday, Gilpin said. Especially, he found prayer with the grieving, frightened young people helpful.

"Prayer is overwhelming in its ability to quiet a troubled soul," he said.

Although recovery will be difficult, Gilpin said he believes that Mission, Alton and the surrounding area ultimately could be strengthened by the tragedy.

"I believe we've learned a greater respect, honor and appreciation for one another. We pretty well shut the town down last week as everybody went to somebody's side to help them," he said.

"Unless future litigation produces hard feelings, the people of this community will be able to look back and see how in the midst of this tragedy, people joined hands in a way that transcended trivialities and brought this little section of south Texas and the world together."

Grijalva elected to head
Hispanic Baptist Seminary

By Orville Scott

N-Texas

DALLAS (BP)--Joshua Grijalva, 67, of San Antonio, Texas, a national consultant for ethnic leadership development with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has been elected president of Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio, by the Texas Baptist State Missions Commission.

A San Antonio native, Grijalva is former dean of the seminary, which was transferred back to the Texas Baptist State Missions Commission last year after a six-year affiliation with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Hispanic Seminary, which trains leaders for Hispanic Baptist churches, operated under the State Missions Commission from 1963 to 1982. Leobardo Estrada, who retired as Texas Baptist ethnic missions coordinator in 1981, has been interim president at the school for the past year.

Hispanic Seminary increased its enrollment from 87 students last fall to 94 this fall, with 33 new students, Estrada said.

James Semple, director of the State Missions Commission, said: "With the Hispanic growth in Texas, one of our primary needs is for strong leadership in our churches. Hispanic Seminary will increasingly be an important institution in training these leaders."

Semple praised Estrada for "an outstanding job as its interim president" and explained that the search committee chose Grijalva "from a long list of outstanding people throughout the country because he is one of the world's great Hispanic leaders in ministerial training and education."

Grijalva said Hispanic Seminary has a great role to fulfill in the Mission Texas evangelism/church-starting campaign goal of reaching every Texan with the gospel.

"Unless we have trained leaders, we'll not be able to meet that goal," he said. "At present rates of growth, there will be 10 million Hispanics in Texas by the year 2020. We must have at least 2,000 more Hispanic congregations by then."

Along with the seminary, said Grijalva, the ethnic leadership development centers, under direction of the six Southern Baptist seminaries and the Home Mission Board, will provide the church leaders that are needed.

Grijalva is field director for 16 Texas leadership development centers, with a total enrollment of about 300 students. He estimates the number will increase to 20 centers with about 500 enrolled by January.

Grijalva was appointed by the Home Mission Board in 1941 as a missionary to Spanish-speaking people, serving as pastor of Antioch Mexican Baptist Church in San Antonio from 1941 to 1955 and Metropolitan Baptist Church in Denver, from 1956 to 1962. He was dean of Hispanic Seminary from 1962 to 1981.

He is a graduate of Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Texas; Southwestern Seminary; and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas.

Grijalva has been as president of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas, moderator of the Mexican Baptist Association in San Antonio and trustee of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board.

He is the author of 21 books including "History of Mexican Baptists in Texas from 1881 to 1981."

Grijalva and his wife, the former Rosalinda Montes, have two children.

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